

## Words from Headteacher

Wednesday 18 March. The day when the Government took the unprecedented step of closing schools and announced that exams would not go ahead in the summer. It is the first time ever. We live in extraordinary times and they call for extraordinary measures.

The Government really had no choice. This Coronavirus needs to be tackled with whatever measures necessary and in doing so sacrifices have to be made. Their modelling has shown that the normal exam series could sit right in the middle of the peak of the virus and clearly schools were going to be in no fit state to prepare students effectively and fairly for them.

However, it has left all of us feeling hurt and confused. Particularly, the Year 11s and Year 13s feel like they have been robbed of their 'rite of passage' to show what they can do in the exam hall this summer. They also felt robbed of their 'final day'. We agreed that Friday could not be their final day. It just was not right. We will get them back together at a better time when we can give them a proper send off.

The feelings of frustration and fear will not pass quickly and there are many questions still unanswered. I am very grateful to Mr Fernandes who has written to parents and students yesterday about the latest guidance from Ofqual. Please rest assured that staff will do all we need to do to ensure that none of our students in Year 11 or Year 13 are disadvantaged.

Perspective will come with time and I am sure that things will work out. We will do all we can to continue to support students through the weeks ahead and give them the best possible experience despite the adversity. As we learn more we will pass it on to you.

Yesterday, like the rest of the country, we began the process of remote teaching in earnest. We are all set up to go and we are confident that we can give the students a good provision. Using Show My Homework, we will set tasks and activities on a daily basis. Bite size chunks of learning will come to you and your son/daughter via the app or website in the normal way. We will be giving work that should occupy your sons/daughters for the same amount of time as their normal lessons with some opportunities for extension and further study. You should find your son/daughter has enough to do to fill the day whilst still allowing time for exercise, play, board games and fun.

Students will be able to communicate with their teachers via Show My Homework and you will be able to see what teachers are saying on the app as well. Students can also send messages to teachers via the school email. Perhaps they want to write to their Tutor or Year Leader. They can write to me or one of the Senior Leadership Team. We will listen to any problems that they are having and try to get it sorted out.

I hope that they will not feel too overwhelmed. I am trying to tell our over-eager teachers not to push students too hard to start with! It will take some settling down.

You can help by making sure that there is a space to work and basic equipment available at home. Obviously, IT is going to be an issue so we are trying to set activities that will not lead to three siblings fighting over the one laptop in the house! Most things will be accessible on a mobile phone. I can imagine that broadband and 4G struggling to cope as the whole country is. We will see. If the technology breaks or if you are having other problems, please remember that students cannot go far wrong with reading, going for a walk, starting a journal or diary and doing some practical things together at home – gardening, baking, cleaning are all good!

To keep the communication channels open in these uncertain times we plan to keep you informed with a weekly bulletin during term time.

So this week we wanted to share the Year 13 and Year 11 farewell assemblies with you all. They were the pride of BFS and we are all grieving the premature way we had to say farewell and end their academic year.

Finally, I ask you all to follow the government advice strictly from yesterday evening and practise strict social distancing. Please do not allow children to meet up in each other's houses. Instead encourage virtual meeting up on line so we all keep each other safe and reduce the risk of further infection.

My best wishes go to you all and please stay safe.

*Mrs S. King*  
Headteacher

## Year 11 Leavers Assembly

On Friday 20 March, far earlier than expected and in highly unusual circumstances we gathered together to say a fond farewell, or 'see you soon' to our wonderful Year 11 students. So many have worked incredibly hard since arriving at BFS and have been amazing ambassadors for our school.

We were able to share some light-hearted moments, including pictures of some very young looking Year 7s at Barton Camp. Mr Pate unearthed some clips of early music lessons, where drumming and ukulele skills were being keenly developed; such concentration on those young faces! It certainly brought some light hearted relief to the day.

We are also incredibly grateful to Ms Huzzey who utilised technology to ensure as many teachers as possible were able to wish Year 11 well, through a hastily made leavers video. Safe to say a few members of staff were close to tears. Year 11 certainly did not end in the way we would have wanted, but it does not diminish the incredible contributions they have made to BFS since they joined us in September 2015, sporting, academic, musically and more. We are incredibly proud of the kind, resilient young people they have become. We will remain in touch with all our students over the coming months and look forward to sharing their results with them in the not too distant future.

*Mrs S Jenkins, Assistant Headteacher*

## Words from Head of Year 11

It has been a pleasure and a privilege to have been your Head of Year for 5 years and I have enjoyed getting to know each and every one of you. I wish you the very best in whatever you go on to do and I hope to see many of you back next year in Sixth Form. Make the best of this situation, before you know it you will be back in lessons and wishing you were locked down!

*Mr M MacBlain, Head of Year*





## Words from Head of Sixth Form

At this difficult time, we are thinking of all our fantastic Sixth Formers, especially our Year 13s who have effectively had their final day at BFS. For some, our final assembly and leavers day on Friday was a sombre and abrupt end to 7 wonderful years. We couldn't have wished for a more polite, more engaging group of students. As I said to them on Friday, they are genuinely one of the nicest year groups I have had the pleasure of teaching. They hold a very special place in my heart and the heart of all of those involved in the BFS community and we wish them all every success in the future, whatever that might look like.



I would also like to again reassure our students that as explained in our email letter home at the beginning of the week, when we have more information about grades, university placements and next steps, we will be in touch.

We are also here for anybody that needs to talk or is concerned. Just email in and one of us will get in touch as soon as we can. In the meantime, stay safe, keep busy and keep your mind active.



*Mr R Walker  
Head of Sixth Form*

## Guidance to parents

We appreciate the additional challenge that closure of the school may present to our young people and their families. At this time it is important for all our students to maintain structure to their weekdays and continue to learn. Guidance to help achieve this is outlined below.

- Weekly tasks for students will be set via Show my Homework, matching subjects they would have studied in school.
- You can use the suggested study timetable to structure your day so that you can complete work set by your teachers.
- Set a time limit. If you don't complete a task don't worry. You can always try it again later.
- Please email completed work to your teachers using your school account or submit it using Show My Homework.
- Use an exercise book or folder to keep any copies work that is completed at home. We would love to see what you have produced once the school reopens.
- Make sure you undertake some physical exercise each day. There are some great videos on YouTube to get you moving. You should also aim to 'read for pleasure' during this period.

If you need to get in contact with the school or a particular teacher please email [admin@bristolfreeschool.org.uk](mailto:admin@bristolfreeschool.org.uk) with your request. This can then be sent on to the correct individual.

*Mr J Fernandes  
Deputy Headteacher*